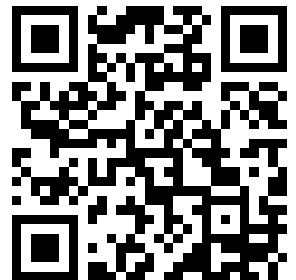


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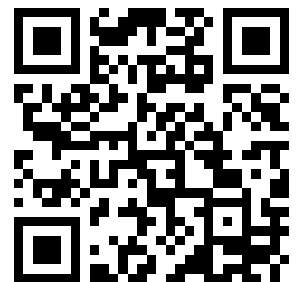


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CHAUCER IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

A DISSERTATION  
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY  
OF THE  
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By  
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C H A U C E R   I N   T H E   S I X T E E N T H  
C E N T U R Y

By  
MAY A. KILLE



## O U T L I N E

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# CHAU CER IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

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It is the purpose of this paper, through a study of the references<sup>1</sup> made to Chaucer during the sixteenth century, to determine the place held by the poet in popular estimation. Both the character and the sources of such evidence must of necessity be varied, but it falls into three general types. The first type is the mere catalogue reference found in wills, inventories of libraries, and the different editions of the poet's works brought out during the century. The second is the numerous references to the poet in the literature and general reading matter of the period. These shade from mere allusions to searching, critical comments. The third is the different adaptations of Chaucerian material by the writers of the period. This evidence of varied character indicates that Chaucer was widely read, highly esteemed, and quoted frequently. The different types of evidence will be treated in the order given.

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1. Special acknowledgment is due to the work of Caroline F. E. Spurgeon, Five Hundred Years of Chaucer Criticism and Allusion. In each case where this work is used, specific reference is made.





### Evidences that Chaucer Was Read

Certain wills, catalogues of private libraries, and editions of the works of Chaucer afford conclusive evidence that Chaucer was read during the sixteenth century.

The will<sup>1</sup> of Margaret, Countess of Richmond and Derby, mother of Henry VII, was made at the Hatfield Episcopacy, February 15, 1509. In this will, she bequeathed great estates and made provision for founding the College of St. John the Evangelist, Cambridge,<sup>2</sup> but among specific items was the gift of her copy of The Canterbury Tales to John Saint John, one of the eight executors of her will.<sup>2</sup> A volume of Canterbury Tales was also one of the bequests in the will of William Gaunte, 1531-1532.<sup>3</sup> By will in 1568, Henry Payne, of Bury St. Edmunds, left "his best gelding and his Chaucer to Sir Giles Allington."<sup>4</sup>

According to the inventory of the goods of Sir Gilbert Talbot<sup>5</sup> taken just after his death August 16, 1517, one of the two books found in Sir Gilbert's own chamber was a copy of The Canterbury Tales. About 1540,<sup>6</sup> William

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1. Spurgeon, Caroline F. E.: Five Hundred Years of Chaucer Criticism and Allusion, p. 71.

2. Brewer, J. S.: Letters and Papers Foreign and Domestic of the Reign of Henry VIII, Vol. I, p. 55, Document 406.

3. Spurgeon: Chaucer Allusion, p. 77.

4. Ibid., p. 102.

5. Ibid., p. 73.

6. Ibid., p. 82.



Cavendish of North Abery made a catalogue of his books. A copy of Chaucer was one of three books listed in that catalogue.

Archaeologia, volume 36,<sup>1</sup> gives extracts from the "Private Account Book" of Sir William More of Losely, in Surrey, in the time of Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth. One item is an inventory of the goods belonging to Sir William on the twentieth of August, 1556. Under the heading, In myne owne closette, was listed one hundred thirty-one books. Of these, one copy was the Works of Chaucer. His Works was also found in William Fairfax's library at Gilling<sup>2</sup> in the last decade of the sixteenth century. The list of books is not dated, but is given between inventories for 1590 and 1596.

These records extend from 1509 to the latter part of the sixteenth century and suggest that the interest in Chaucer extended throughout the century. Nor was the interest confined to one locality in England. Surrey County, the home of Sir William More, is in southern England; Gilling, one of the residences of Sir William Fairfax, is near the center of Yorkshire in northern England. Lincoln is south of the Humber and sixty miles southeast of Gilling. Bury St. Edmunds is in Suffolk County; Hatfield is less than twenty miles north of London.

1. Archaeologia, Vol. 36, pp. 290-292.

2. Op. Cit., Vol. 43, pp. 152-153.



A third kind of evidence that Chaucer was read is found in the number of editions of individual works or of the complete works of the author.

The following editions were printed in the sixteenth century. Troilus and Criseyde was printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1517 and by Richard Fynson in 1526. In the same year, Fynson printed The Hous of Fame, Truth, The Canterbury Tales, and The Parlement of Foules. The last was published again in 1530 by Wynkyn de Worde. In 1523, William Thynne edited a collection containing nearly all the works of Chaucer in which were printed for the first time The Romaunt of the Rose, ll. 1-1705, Legend of Good Women, Book of the Duchess, Complaint to Pity, Lack of Steadfastness, and Astrolabe.<sup>1</sup> In 1542, there was brought out a second edition to which was added The Plowman's Tale.<sup>2</sup> A reprint of this second edition was made between 1545-1550. In 1561, John Stow re-edited Thynne's edition adding Conti-lesse and Chaucer's Words unto Adam, and at the very close of the sixteenth century (1598) Thomas Speght brought out a new and supposedly complete edition of the works of Chaucer. Thus there were four new editions of the Works of Chaucer after the first collected edition by Thynne in 1532. This fact indicates that Chaucer was a great favorite, for

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1. Spurgeon: Chaucer-Allusion, p. 78.

2. Ibid., p. 83.



new editions arise from a demand created by the readers of that author's works.

Further evidences of the general reading of Chaucer are the allusions to the poet in the literature, prefaces, and letters of the period. At least one hundred eighty-five<sup>1</sup> pieces of writing contain one or more Chaucerian references. In one hundred seven selections, Chaucer is mentioned by name. There are eighteen allusions to The Canterbury Tales and sixteen to Troilus and Criseyde. Some poems are referred to but once. The foregoing selections are the work of one hundred twenty-eight different writers, men of various interests. There is the school-master, the minister, the judge, the annalist, the geographer, the ecclesiastical historian, the Chief Clerk of the Kitchen to Henry VIII, James VI of Scotland, the printer, the professional writer of prose, and the poet.

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1. One hundred seventy-nine of these allusions are cited by Miss Spurgeon. Those not cited by her are:

1. Heywood, John: The Proverbs, Epigrams, and Miscellanies, A Dialogue, "Unknown-unsought," p. 38.
2. Howard, Henry, Earl of Surrey: Complaint of a dying lover refused upon his ladies unjust mistaking of his writing, Tottel's Miscellany, pp. 16-18.
3. Howell, Thomas: The Arbor of Amitie "To one who after death would leave his livelie picture" (British Bibliographer, Vol. I, p. 106).
4. Skelton, John: Poetical Works.
  - a. The Bouge of Courte, Vol. I, pp. 34, 43, 46.
  - b. loems against Garneshe, l. 41.
  - c. Magnyfycence, l. 256.





Some of these allusions are now treated with more detail.

John Skelton, in a long poem called Phillip Sparrow, has the different birds attend and take part in the funeral services for a pet sparrow. Chanticleer tells the time of day. The owner of the sparrow is asked to write an epitaph. This she does not feel qualified to do even if she has read The Canterbury Tales and can tell of Palamon, Arcite, Duke Theseus, Pertelote, and the Wife of Bath.

"And of the wife of Bath,  
 That worketh much scath  
 When her tale is told  
 Among huswives bold  
 How she contold  
 Her husbands as she wold  
 And them to dispise  
 In the homeliest wise  
 Bring other wives in thought  
 Their husbandes to set at naughte."<sup>1</sup>

Here, the general assertion is that the Wife of Bath's Tale caused domestic trouble wherever it was told. Such a generalization argues for a wide reading of the tale.

The owner of the sparrow was Jane Scroupe,<sup>2</sup> and a pupil of the black nuns at Carow. This nunnery was a place

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1. Phillip Sparrow, ll. 18-627.

2. Cambridge History of English Literature, Vol. III, p. 79.



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"And of the wife of Bath,  
 Thar worketh much scath  
 Whan her tale is told  
 Among huswives bold  
 How she controld  
 Her husbands as she wold  
 And them to dispise  
 In the homeliest wise  
 Bring other wives in thought  
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of unknown authorship. The author, worn out from writing the first six chapters of his book, decided to walk about in the fields and forests. He spent the night in the woods. In the early morning, he went to the seashore. After watching an artillery battle on the sea, he returned to the green fields and joined a group of shepherds who had just driven their sheep and cattle to the pasture. Later the wives of the shepherds brought out the morning meal. All sat down on a bed of rushes and ate their breakfast of plain food. In the quiet hour after breakfast, one of the chief shepherds made a long talk in which he discussed the advantages of life in the country compared with life in the city, and the contributions of shepherds to science. At the close of their address, the shepherd's wife suggested that each one should tell a tale.

The author does not retell any of the stories told by the shepherds, but does characterize them and give their names. He calls them "taylis of canterberrye" but mentions no story which the Canterbury Pilgrims told. The comparison lay in the plan and the wide range of stories. "Sum was in prose & sum was in verse sum var stories and sum var flet taylis."<sup>1</sup>

The plan of The Canterbury Tales was used in 1590 by the author of The Cobler of Caunterburie,<sup>2</sup> or An invective

1. The Complaynte of Scotlande, E. E. T. S., 1872-3, part i, p. 63.

2. Quoted in Chaucer Allusion, p. 131.



of education for the young ladies of the chief families in the diocese of Norwich.<sup>1</sup> The fact that Lady Jane knew Chaucer suggests that the reading of Chaucer was encouraged by the nuns of Carow.

The next allusion indicates that his works were also read in the monasteries. Henry Bradshaw, a monk of Chester, received his education in the monastic schools. He translated from Latin into English verse the life and history of St. Werburge, and called his translation The Holy Life and History of Saint Werburge. Near the close of the book is a group of stanzas under the heading Go Forth, Little Book, to the People. The third stanza from the last is,

"To all auncient poetes, litell boke, submytte the  
Whilom flowyng in eloquence facundious,  
And to all other whiche present nowe be:  
Fyrst to maister Chaucer and Ludgate sentencious.  
Also to preignaunt Barkley nowe being religious  
To inventive Skelton and poet laureate  
Prayetthem all of pardon both erly and late."

In these words, a good monk of Chester bids the book that he has dedicated to the people to ask the pardon of all poets, but first of all of "maister Chaucer."

One of the eighteen references to The Canterbury Tales was made about 1549 in The Complaynte of Scotlande

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1. Dyce: Skelton's Works, Vol. II, p. 122.





against Tarltons Newes out of Purgatorie. In this selection people travelling in the Barge running between Billingsgate and Gravesend told sundry tales just as did Chaucer's pilgrims on their way to Canterbury. Some of the pleasure of telling the stories seemed to come from the fact that they were consciously imitating the other travellers. However, the author realized that his stories were inferior to those of Chaucer.

Other references to The Canterbury Tales show that many people seem to regard them as tales without credence. Richard Layton<sup>1</sup> considered them as fictitious, for in 1535, desiring to ridicule a book of "Our Lady's miracles" wrote that "the book was well able to match the Canterbury Tales." In 1575, Turberville in The Books of Faulconrie or Hawking<sup>2</sup> put the Canterbury Tale in the same class with an old woman's fable. In discussing a disease known as pin in the Hawk's foot, he scorned the remedy, "that of opening the vein of the leg," by stating that it was "a thing not only frivolous to talke of and a verie old woman's fable or Canterburie tale, but also verie perillous to be put in practice." "Canterbury Tale" is used in Robert Greene's Menaphon<sup>3</sup> in the

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1. Calendar of State Papers, ed. J. Gairdner, Vol. IX, No. 42.
  2. The Books of Faulconrie or Hawking, p. 260.
  3. Greene, Robert: Complete Works, "Menaphon," Vol. VI, p. 86.



sense of a tale told to suit the occasion. Melicertus tries to have Samola believe that the story she has heard about his being in love with a beautiful shepherdess of Arcadia is untrue. "Be there more of that name in Arcady beside myselfe," quoth Samola. I know not quoth Melicertus, but wer there a million, only you are Melicertus Samola. But of a million, quoth she, I cannot be Melicertus Samola, for love hath but one arrowe of desire in his quiver, but one string to his bow, & in choyce but one aime of affection. Have ye alreadie, quoth Melicertus, set your rest upon some higher personage? No, quoth Samola, I meane by your selfe, for I have hearde that your fancie is linked alreadie to a beautiful shepherdess in Arcadie. At this, the pore swaine tainted his cheeks a vermillion die, yet thinking to carry out the matter with a jest, he stood to his tackling thus: Whosoever Samola descanted of that love, tolde you a Canterbury tale."

Two allusions to Chaucer's poem, The Hous of Fame, will now be considered. One reference is to the House of Fame, the other to the Palace of Fame. As pictured by Chaucer, these are two distinctly different places. The House of Fame is a revolving house that is built of twigs and situated half way between the earth and sky. Here all sounds and voices from earth and sky meet. The noise outside of the house is so great that it is heard at a distance as great

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1. Greene, Robert: Menaphon, Vol. VI, p. 86.



as that between Rome and the Oise River in France.<sup>1</sup> The Palace of Fame is built on ice. In this palace lives Fame, a feminine creature with many eyes, ears, and tongues.<sup>2</sup>

William Baldwin refers to the House of Fame in the second part of his story, Beware the Cat (1561).

"While I harkened to this broil, laboring to discern bothe voices and noyces a sunder, I heard such a mixture as I think was never in Chaucers house of fame, for there was nothing within an hundred mile of me doon on any side, (for from so far but no further the ayre may come because of obliquation) but I herd it as wel as if I had been by it, and could discern all voyces, but by means of noyses understand none."<sup>3</sup> The author imagines a place in space where he hears distinctly the sounds coming from a brawl one hundred miles away, and points out that this mixture of voices and sounds outdoes any blending of sounds that ever occurred in Chaucer's House of Fame.

Shakespeare mentions the Palace of Fame in Titus Andronicus II, 1, 126-7.

"The emperor's court is like the house of Fame,

The palace full of tongues, of eyes, and ears."

Although Shakespeare uses the term, house of Fame, he immediately defines it as the palace.

1. Hous of Fame, Bk. III, ll. 830-895.

2. Ibid., ll. 38-302.

3. Quoted in Chaucer-Allusion, by Caroline F. E. Spurgeon, p. 95.



Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde seems to have been widely known, for it is referred to by sixteen different authors. One of the first of these was Stephen Hawes in 1506; one of the later writers was Nicholas Breton in 1577. There are many other references to Criseyde as portrayed by Robert Henryson in The Testament of Love written as a sequel to Chaucer's story and published in Thynne's collection of the works of Chaucer and others in 1532. Thomas Howell in his poem, Ruine the Rewarde of Vice,<sup>1</sup> tells the story according to Henryson up to the last stanza, but then completes the story with a moral as did Chaucer.

"Take heed therefor how you your pryme do spend,

For Vice brings plagues, and Vertue happy end."

But the sixteen authors mentioned at the beginning of the paragraph refer only to Chaucer's version of the story. Hawes, Sidney and Peele praise Chaucer's handling of the story. The other writers use some element from Troilus and Criseyde in their own poems. These references will be treated more in detail under the section of the paper dealing with the adaptation of Chaucerian material by sixteenth century writers.

Lines from The Prologue to The Canterbury Tales were quoted by Richard Hakluyt,<sup>2</sup> the geographer, who collected and published from 1598 to 1600 all the accounts of voyages

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1. Howell, Thomas: Devises, p. 120.

2. Hakluyt, Richard: The Principal Navigations Voyages Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation, vol. I, pp. 307-8.





and discoveries made by Englishmen. These lines tell where English knights were accustomed to seek adventures.

The foregoing allusions suggest that Chaucer was read, but the following are definite statements concerning the reading of Chaucer. Edmund Becke, in the Preface to his edition of the Bible published in 1549, states that the magistrates and nobility were accustomed to spend an hour or two a day reading the Chronicles and Canterbury Tales.<sup>1</sup> In 1570, John Foxe<sup>2</sup> wrote, "Chaucer's works are all printed in one volume, and therefore known to all men." Meredith Hanmer<sup>3</sup> and Hugh Latimer<sup>4</sup> classed the Tales of Chaucer among the popular books of the day. In The debate between the Herald of England and France,<sup>5</sup> John Coke named Chaucer, Gower, Lydgate, Bongan, Groscyn, Pace, Lyly, Linacre, Turnstall, Hoper, and Coverdale as the great clerks and orators of England and then declared, "Albeit the persons of these honorable men are to many unknown, yet their famous works are common in all the universities of Christendom." The

1. Quoted in Spurgeon: Chaucer-Allusion, p. 88.

2. Foxe: Acts and Monuments, Vol. IV, p. 249.

3. Preface to Ancient Ecclesiastical Histories translated by Meredith Hanmer.

4. Parker soc. 1844-5, Vol. I, pp. 106-7.

5. Coke, John: The Debate - - Fraunce, p. 108.



following quotation from a letter<sup>1</sup> written by Francis Beaumont,<sup>2</sup> father of the dramatist, to his college friend, Thomas Speght, is Beaumont's testimony that Chaucer was read at the University of Cambridge from 1560-1570.<sup>2</sup>

"And here I cannot forget to remember unto you these ancient learned men of our time in Cambridge, whose diligence in reading of Chaucers works themselves, and commending them to others of the younger sort, did first bring you and me in love with him; and one of them at that time was and now is (as you know) one of the rarest scholars of the world. The same may be said of that worthy man for learning, your good friend in Oxford, who with many other of like excellent judgment have ever had Chaucer in most high reputation.

From Leicester the last of June, Anno 1597.

Your assured and ever loving friend

Francis Beaumont."

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1. Letter is published in Speght's Chaucer of 1598.

2. Beaumont and Speght were in Peterhouse, Cambridge, between 1560-70.



Different Manifestations of Interest in  
and Admiration for Chaucer

Many allusions like the quotation from Judge Beaumont's letter, suggest that the poet was held in high esteem.

In the Preface [written by Brian Tuke but in the name of William Thynne] prefixed to the first collected edition of Chaucer, William Thynne states that he had always taken great delight in reading or hearing read the books of Chaucer. Furthermore, as he read manuscripts and printed books, he discovered that the texts differed widely and that a number of the poems had never been printed. Consequently, moved by love for Chaucer and a desire to increase the glory and honour of England by preserving the works of so famous a poet, he decided to search for manuscripts in order to find those that were nearest to the original. Of this search for manuscripts, William Thynne's son, Francis, wrote in 1598,<sup>1</sup>

"My father not onelye used the helpe of that lerned and eloquent knyghte and antiquary, Sir Brian Tuke, but also made great serche for copies to perfecte his works; but further had commissiōe to serche all the libraries of Englande for Chaucers Workes, so that oute of all the Abbies of this Realme (whiche reserved anye monumentes therof) he was fully furnished with multitudes of Bookes, amongst whiche, one

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1. Thynne, Francis: Animadversions, p. 6.



coppye of some part of his woorkes came to his hands subscribed in divers places withe "examinatur Chaucer."<sup>1</sup>

After a careful comparison of these manuscripts, William Thynne published his first edition and dedicated it to King Henry VIII.

Thynne was highly praised for his endeavor by Robert Braham in 1555. These are Braham's words, "If it had not bene in this our time, wherein all kindes of learnyng (thancked be god) have as much floryshed as ever they did by any former dayes within this realme, and namelye by the dylygence of one willyam Thime (sic) a gentelman who laudably studyouse to the polyshing of so great a Jewell, with ryghte good judgement travail, & great paynes causing the same to be perfected and stamped as it is nowe read, the sayde Chaucers workes had utterly peryshed, or at the lest bin so depraved by corrupcion of copies, that at the laste, there shoulde no parte of hys meaning have ben found in any of them."<sup>2</sup>

In 1545 appeared the first life<sup>3</sup> of Chaucer. It was written in Latin by John Leland, chaplain and librarian to Henry VIII, who in 1533 commissioned Leland to search

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1. Thynne, Francis: Animadversions, p. 6.

2. Braham, Robert: The pistle to the reader for Lydgate's translation of Auncient--Trovars. Printed in Prefaces--English books, by W. C. Hazlitt, 1874, pp. 18, 19.

3. Hammond, E. P.: Chaucer: A Bibliographical Manual, pp. 1-7.





after England's antiquities.<sup>1</sup> Although Leland worked faithfully, he did not find the records requisite for writing a true biography of Chaucer, but seems to have based his account on tradition and imagination. Much of the material collected by Leland was used by Bale<sup>2</sup> who published two lives of the poet, both in Latin. Bale added some astonishing statements of his own, such as the statement that Chaucer was "eques auratus." However, the untrustworthiness of these biographies does not detract from the interest that Leland and Bale had in Chaucer.

Admiration for Chaucer led Thomas Speght to edit the poet's works in an attractive manner. This edition contains the picture of Chaucer from the Occleve manuscript, a criticism of his poetry, the argument of each selection, an explanation of the hard words, and the poet's biography. This biography was the first English account of the life of Chaucer. To write it Speght examined the records. He also made use of notes gathered by John Stow,<sup>3</sup> an antiquary and editor of Chaucer. Although Speght refuted many of the statements made by Leland and Bale, he also accepted many of their assertions.

Speght's edition of Chaucer brought a bitter disappointment to another admirer of Chaucer. This was Francis

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1. Gardiner, S. R., & Mullinger, J. Bass: Introduction to the Study of English History, pp. 211-212.

2. Hammond, E. P.: Chaucer: A Bibliographical Manual, pp. 10-13.

3. Stow, John: A Survey of London, Vol. II, pp. 110-11.



Thynne, son of William Thynne, the first editor of Chaucer. Francis Thynne had been collecting notes and hoping to re-edit his father's book. Instead, he wrote his Animadversions in which he defended his father's edition and pointed out certain mistakes in Speght's book.

The schoolmaster, Thomas Speght, and the judge, Francis Beaumont, were not the only students who learned to love Chaucer at the university of Cambridge. Gabriel Harvey, who entered Christ College, Cambridge, in 1566, and Edmund Spenser, who matriculated in 1569, were great admirers of Chaucer. In 1573, Harvey made his first attempt in English meter. This was a half-serious bit of scribbling treating of anything that happened to come into his mind. Harvey named it The Schollars Looe or Reconcilement of Contrayes.<sup>1</sup> In discussing his reading, he wrote, "Now and then I allot a spare hour to Chaucer, Gascoyne, Gower, or Master Ascham." Later, he made notes upon Chaucer in his Quintilian and The Surveys of the World and wrote notes all through his copy of Speght's Chaucer.

Harvey's copy of Speght's Chaucer is now owned by Miss Meade, the great-granddaughter of Bishop Percy. The notes have been published by G. C. Moore Smith in a book entitled Gabriel Harvey's Marginalia. On the title page of Speght's Chaucer in Harvey's own handwriting are the words,

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1. Harvey, Gabriel: Letter-Book, p. 134.



"gabriel harvey. 1598."<sup>1</sup> Thus Harvey became the owner of this book in the same year that it was published.

At the end of Chaucer's Life, Harvey added this comment on the poet Chaucer.

"Amongst the sonnes of the English Muses: Gower, Lidgate, Heywood, Phaer, & a fewe other of famous memorie, as meethinkes, good in manie kindes; but aboove all other, Chawcer in mie conceit, is excellent in everie veine, & humour; & none so like him for gallant variete, both in matter, & forme, as Sir Philip Sidney."

After Speght's Argument for The Prologue, Harvey wrote,

"Pleasant interteinement of Time, with sociable intercourse of Tales, stories, discourses, & merriments of all fashions. Gallant varietie of notable veines, & humors in manie kinds, supra to his looving frend, concerning his observation of the art of Decorum in his Tales. A fine discretion in the autor; & a pithie note in the Censor. utrunque scitum."

"His looving frend" is Thomas Speght, who in the comment on The Prologue to The Canterbury Tales said that Chaucer described the "reporters" so that "the Reader seeing the qualitie of the person, may judge of his speech accordingly: wherein Chaucer hath most excellently kept that decorum which Horace requireth in that behalf."

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1. Smith, G. C. Moore: Gabriel Harvey's Marginalia, p.xiv.



Shepheardes Calender, Colin is represented as having sung his first lay "after Tityrus." Thus three times Spenser referred to Chaucer as his teacher of the art of poetry.

In addition to these three allusions to Chaucer under the name of Tityrus, Spenser referred to him as Dan Chaucer and Dan Geffrey. Both of these references occur in the Faerie Queene. In Book IV, Canto II, Spenser thinking that a part of Dan Chaucer's Squier's Tale had been lost, completes it by weaving a romance for Cambell and one for Canacee. Spenser states that he would not have undertaken to restore the tale had he not felt that there was surviving in him an infusion of the spirit of Chaucer. In Book VII, Canto VII, Spenser declines to describe dame Nature, whose description Dan Geffrey did not undertake. In each place Spenser praises Chaucer. This will be given under Chaucer criticism.

About the same time that Spenser was writing the Faerie Queene, someone (perhaps Robert Greene) was writing Greene's Vision.<sup>1</sup> In this the author has given a description of Chaucer as portrayed in the Occleve Manuscript. Greene's picture agrees with Occleve's<sup>2</sup> in nearly every detail. Greene places a book instead of a rosary in the hand of Chaucer, and adds a belt and an inkhorn.

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1. Greene's Works, Vol. xii, pp. 208-74.

2. The full length picture of Chaucer from the Occleve Manuscript is reproduced in Speght's edition.





Greene's description of sir Geoffrey Chawcer is,

"His stature was not very tall,  
 Leane he was, his legs were small  
 Head within a stock of red,  
 A buttond bonnet on his head,  
 From under which did hang I weene  
 Silver haires both bright and sheene,  
 His beard was white, trimmed round,  
 His countenance blithe and merry found,  
 A Sleeveless Iacket large and wide,  
 With many plaights and skirts side,  
 Of water Chamlet did he weare,  
 A whittell by his belt he beare,  
 His shoes were corned broad before,  
 His Inckhorne at his side he wore,  
 And in his hand he bore a booke,  
 Thus did this auntient Poet looke.<sup>1</sup>

These different manifestations of interest in Chaucer argue that the poet was well known and highly esteemed.

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1. Greene: Works, Vol. XII, p. 214.



An Estimation of Chaucer, The Poet.

This part of the paper deals with the sixteenth century critical comments upon Chaucer. Both Scottish and English writers have given their estimation of the poet Chaucer.

In Scotland, there existed a Chaucer school. Gavin Douglas, William Dunbar, and Sir David Lindsay praised the three poets, Gower, Chaucer, and Lydgate, but considered Chaucer the greatest of the three. In 1503 Dunbar<sup>1</sup> called Chaucer the best rhetorician, the best English poet, and the "light" or director of the English language. In 1501, Douglas wrote that Chaucer was without an equal in the English language.

"Geffrey Chaucier, as a per se sans pair

In his vulgare!"<sup>2</sup>

However, Douglas' praise was not unqualified, for in the "Prolong of the First Buik" in Douglas' translation of The XIII Bukes of Eneades,<sup>3</sup> Douglas ranked the English poet below the Roman poet and criticized Chaucer for making Aeneas false in the story of Dido in The Legende of Good

1. Dunbar, William: The Goldyn Targe, ll. 253-61.

2. Douglas, Gavin: Poetical Works, The Falis of Honoure, Vol. I, p. 36.

3. Ibid., Vol. II, pp. 14-17.



Women.<sup>1</sup> This fault was excused because "Chaucer was ever wemenis friend." In this statement, Douglas suggested that Chaucer idealized women. Furthermore, Douglas praised the clear, eloquent and pleasant style of Chaucer. His musical verse was commented upon by Lindsay.<sup>2</sup> Thus the Scottish poets saw in Chaucer the marks of a great poet.

In England, Stephen Hawes, John Skelton, Thomas Feylde, William Forrest, John Coke, Gabriel Harvey, John Lawson, George Puttenham, and Thomas Nash, associated the three names, Chaucer, Gower, and Lydgate. Often all three poets were praised. Hawes<sup>3</sup> in 1506 and Lawson<sup>4</sup> in 1581 ranked Lydgate higher than Chaucer. Feylde<sup>5</sup> called Chaucer "floure of rethoughe eloquence." Forrest<sup>6</sup> realized that his poems did not have the poetic beauty of the poems of Gower or of Chaucer, "that poet soveraynge." Harvey<sup>7</sup> in his poem written at the instant of Gascoigne's death advised

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1. Chaucer: The Legende of Good Women, ll. 924-27, l. 1236, l. 1301, ll. 1327-28.

2. Lindsay, Sir David: The complaynte and testament of a Popinjay, Vol. I, pp. 61-2.

3. Hawes, Stephen: The Pastime of Pleasure, p. 54.

4. Lawson, John: Lawson Orchet, Extract printed by S. E. Brydges in Restituta, Vol. IV, 1814, p. 29.

5. Feylde, Thomas: The Controversy between a Lover and a Jay, Prologue, St. 3.

6. Forrest, William: History of Joseph, p. 167.

7. Harvey, Gabriel: Letter-Book, Preface, p. VIII.

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Gascoigne, then in the spirit world, to shake hands with all his ancient countrymen but to make acquaintance with Chaucer first.

"This pleasure reape: and shake thou hands  
With auncient countrymen of thine:  
Acquayntaunce take of Chaucer first  
And then with Gower and Lydgate dine."

In addition to Chaucer, Gower, and Lydgate, George Puttenham<sup>1</sup> in mentioning poets of his own day wrote, "But of them all particularly this is myne opinion, that Chaucer, with Gower, Lidgat and Harding for their antiquitie ought to have the first place, and Chaucer as the most renowned of them all, for the much learning appeareth to be in him above any of the rest." Thus Puttenham ranked Chaucer above all other English poets.

In 1581, Sir Philip Sidney<sup>2</sup> wrote that few good poems had been produced in English since the time of Chaucer. Webb<sup>3</sup> said that Chaucer was "accounted the God of English Poets" and that this title had been given him for "honor's sake." In 1595, Thomas Churchyard<sup>4</sup> stated that

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1. Puttenham, George: The Arte of English Poesie, Elizabethan Critical Essays, Vol. II.

2. Sidney, Sir Philip: An Apologie for Poetrie, p. 51 (Arber).

3. Webb, William: A Discourse of English Poetrie, in Elizabethan Critical Essays, ed. G. Gregory Smith, Vol. I, p. 241.

4. Churchyard, Thomas: A Praise of Poetry, Reprint in Fondest Caducas, Vol. 2, pp. 28, 38.





England had had three great men who had advanced poetry. These three were Sidney of Churchyard's own time, and Chaucer and Gower of the fourteenth century. Roger Ascham in his Toxophilus<sup>1</sup> calls Chaucer "our Englische Homer." In a dream, William Bullein<sup>2</sup> saw Chaucer sitting among the great poets of the world in a chair of gold covered with roses.

Thus writer after writer in the sixteenth century asserted that Chaucer was a great poet. Howell's<sup>3</sup> assertion that Chaucer's name had lived and would live because he left behind him "a fair picture of noble acts of mind," has stood the test of more than three hundred years.

As an evaluation of the poet Chaucer, Spenser's estimate is pre-eminent. To him Chaucer was a renowned poet worthy to have his name inscribed on the "beadroll" reserved for those of eternal Fame. Furthermore, Spenser suggested that a happy gentle spirit, a poetic mind and the power to use poetic language were blended almost perfectly in Chaucer. Note the following lines from The Faerie Queene.

"Dan Chaucer, well of English undefyled,  
On Fame's eternal beadroll worthie to be fyled."<sup>4</sup>

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1. Ascham, Roger: Works, Toxophilus, Vol. II, p. 42.
  2. Bullein, William: Fever Pestilence, pp. 16-17.
  3. Howell, Thomas: The Arbor of Amitie, Printed in British Bibliographer, Vol. I, p. 106.
  4. Spenser: Faerie Queene, Book IV, Canto II, 32, 8-9.

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"Then pardon, O most sacred happie spirit."<sup>1</sup>

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"That old Dan Geffrey (in whose gentle spright  
The pure well head of Poesie did dwell."<sup>2</sup>

In the following discussion, are presented the different characteristics of Chaucer's work.

One involves the classification of his works. In The Pastime of Pleasure, Hawes classifies the works of Chaucer as books made on "his own invention," books that are his "translation," and books that are drawn upon his own "imagination."

"The boke of fame, which is sentencyous,  
He drewe hym selfe on hys own invencyon;  
And than the tragidyas so pytous  
Of the XIX ladyes, was his translaacyon;  
And upon hys ymaginacyon  
He made also the tales of Caunterbury;  
Some vertuous, and some glad and mery."<sup>3</sup>

In chapter eight of the same poem, Hawes explains invention and imagination. According to his definition of invention,<sup>4</sup>

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1. Faerie Queene, Book IV, Canto II, 34.
2. Ibid., Book VI, Canto VII, 9, 3-4.
3. The Pastime of Pleasure, p. 53.
4. Ibid., p. 29.



The Hous of Fame is the result of the choice, the adaptation, and the recombination of material that had been previously used in similar situations. In turn, imagination is a marvellous operation of making out of naught; that is, scattered and unrelated details, a picture, a sketch, or a narrative that is full of meaning. Through the imagination the author has the power to create a composition that hides a truth and yet presents that truth. Hawes realized that the best in the Canterbury Tales was the result of Chaucer's wonderful imaginative powers, and no doubt regarded the Tales as fables written to teach definite truths. Near the close of the century, Beaumont gave his estimation of the original elements in The Canterbury Tales in these words, "Chaucers devise of his Canterbury pilgrimage is meereley his owne, without following the example of any that ever writ before him. His drift is to touch all sortes of men, and to discover all vices of that Age, and that he doth in such sort, as he never failes to hit every marke he levels at."<sup>1</sup>

Out of Chaucer's sympathetic touch with humanity grew the moral characteristics of his poems. Hawes praised the didactic quality of Chaucer's works. Of these Hawes wrote, "His works kindle moral virtue in men's hearts, his books are sweet and profitable."<sup>2</sup> In The Example of Vertu,<sup>3</sup>

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1. Beaumont, Francis: Letter to Thomas Speght, printed in Speght's edition of Chaucer, 1598.

2. Hawes, Stephen: The Pastime of Pleasure, p. 53.

3. Hawes Stephen: The Example of Vertu, 3rd st. from end.



he suggested that Chaucer was expert in expressing an unpleasant truth in a pleasing form or guise.

This subtle cunning of Chaucer appealed to Thomas Lodge, for, in his reply to Gossen's indiscriminate attacks on poets and poetry, he wrote, "Chaucer in pleasant vein can rebuke sin uncontrold; an, though he be lavish in the letter, his sence is serious." Chaucer's consummate skill in attacking abuses without having the attack return to the author, is characterized by Webbe in the following quotation:

"He by his delightesome vayne, so gulled the eares of men with his devises, that, although corruption bare such sway in most matters, that learning and truth might skant bee admitted to shoue it selfe, yet without controllment, myght hee gyarde at the vices and abuses of all states, and garvle with very sharpe and eger inventions, which he did so learnedly and pleasantly, that none therefore would call him into question. For such was his bolde spyrit, that what enormities he saw in any, he would not spare to pay them home, eyther in playne words, or else in some prety and pleasant covert, that the simplest might espy him."<sup>2</sup>

In A Report and Discourse<sup>3</sup> written in 1552, Ascham points out Chaucer's power of character portraiture.

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1. Lodge, Thomas: Defence of Poetry, Printed in Elizabethan Critical Essays edited by G. Smith, Vol. I, p. 69.

2. Webbe, William: A Discourse of English Poetrie, Elizabethan Critical Essays.

3. Ascham, Roger: The Whole Works, Vol. III, p. 6.





"Diligence also must be used by an Historian in keepyng truly the order of tyme: and describing lyvely, both the site of places and nature of persons not onely for the outward shape of the body: but also for the inward disposition of the mynde, as Thucydides doth in many places very trimly, and Homer everywhere, and that alwayes most excellently, which observation is chiefly to be marked in hym. And our Chaucer doth the same, very praise worthely: marke hym well and conferre hym with any other that writeth of in our tyme in their proudest tounge, whosoever lyst." Chaucer's power of individualizing a character is brought out in Sidney's discussion<sup>1</sup> of the statement that the pictures of Virtue found in poetry are more effective than the mere definitions of Virtue found in philosophy. The character of Pandarus was so skillfully individualized that by Sidney's time the name Pander had come to signify the trade of Pandarus.

Another aspect of Chaucer's treatment of his characters in his observance of the law of decorum. This law requires each character to act and speak in harmony with his disposition. The scurrility of the Miller's Tale or of the Wife of Bath's Tale was pardoned on the ground that Chaucer obeyed the law of decorum. Beaumont made this observation in his letter<sup>2</sup> to Speght.

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1. Sidney, Sir Philip: An Apologie for Poetrie, 1869, ed. Arber, p. 34.

2. Beaumont, Francis: Letter to Thomas Speght, Speght's Chaucer.



"Touching the incivillitie Chaucer is charged with-  
all; What Romane poet hath lesse offended this way than hee?  
. . . . . How much had hee [Chaucer] swarved  
from Decorum, if hee had made his Miller, his Cooke, and his  
Carpenter, to have told such honest and good tales, as hee  
made his Knight, his Squire, his Lawyer, and Scholler tell?"

The people of the sixteenth century realized what  
a great influence Chaucer had on the English language. In  
1520, John Rastell<sup>1</sup> praised Gower and Chaucer for writing  
in their mother tongue. Rastell was pleased that he could  
say that through the efforts of all the writers, the English  
language had been amplified to such an extent that it was  
possible to translate a piece of literature from any language  
into English. Chaucer, by creating a great literature that  
people liked to read, gave direction to the development of  
the English language. This fact is mentioned in the words  
of Sidney, "So in the Italian language, the first that  
made it aspire to be a Treasure-house of Science, were the  
poets Dante, Boccace, and Petrarch.. So in our English were  
Gower and Chaucer.

"After whom, encouraged and delighted with their  
excellent foregoing, others have followed, to beautifie  
our mother tongue as wel in the same kinde as in other Arts."

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1. Spurgeon: Chaucer-Allusion, p. 73.



The Prefatory Epistles and Epistles Dedicatory show that the translators of the time were in doubt whether to use Chaucerian words, foreign words, or the most common words. Betham in translating "The Precepts of Warre"<sup>1</sup> tried to use Chaucerian terms. Two years later, 1546, Peter Ashton used the most familiar words in his translation of the Turkes Chronioles.<sup>2</sup> Wilson, the author of The Arte of Rhetorique,<sup>3</sup> in 1553 took the same attitude toward the English language as did Ashton, for he wrote, "Emong al other lessons, this should first be learned that we do not affect any straunge ynkehorne termes, but so speake as is commonly received." He criticized the learned gentleman who mixed foreign words with his English, and laughed at the fine Courtier who would talk "nothing but pure Chaucerian."

In A Discourse of English Poetrie, William Webbe refuted the contention that Chaucer's poetry lacked art, in these words, "Though the manner of hys stile may seeme blunte and course to many fine English eares at these dayes, yet in trueth, if it be equally pondered, and with good judgment advised, and confirmed with the time where in he wrote, a man shall perceiue thereby even a true picture or perfect shape of a right Poet." The supposed lack of music

1. Censuria Literaria, Vol. IV of the new series, p. 69.
2. The British Bibliographer, Vol. II, p. 94.
3. Wilson, Thomas: The Arte of Rhetorique, p. 162.



was due to the change in pronunciation that had taken place, Webbe considered Chaucer a true poet.

A number of writers seemed greatly impressed with the wide learning of Chaucer. He was an authority on dreams,<sup>1</sup> alchemy, and astronomy. Gabriel Harvey commended Chaucer as highly for his knowledge of astronomy, philosophy, and other parts of profound and cunning art as for his "wit, pleasant veins, variety of poetical discourse, & all humanitie." He also felt that Chaucer was one of the most learned men of the latter part of the fourteenth century. In this respect Chaucer filled Harvey's requirements of a poet, for Harvey wrote, "It is not sufficient for poets to be superficial humanists: but they must be exquisite artists, and curious universal schollers."<sup>2</sup>

The foregoing comments afford conclusive evidence of the preëminence of Chaucer as a poet during the sixteenth century.

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1. Shakespeare Jest Book, tale 28, pp. 28-29.

2. Smith, G. C. Moore: Gabriel Harvey's Marginalia, pp. 159-161, 162.





Interest in Chaucer Due to His Spurious Works.

In the latter half of the sixteenth century, Chaucer was praised by the ecclesiastical historian John Foxe,<sup>1</sup> who based much of his commendation upon Jacke Uplande, The Testament of Love, and The Plowman's Tale, three works then ascribed to Chaucer. Jacke Uplande was given in full in Foxe's discussion of the Friars. The Testament of Love was cited as giving Chaucer's belief concerning the bread and wine used in the Holy Communion. Foxe called Chaucer a true witness of the Church. Furthermore, he stated on the authority of others that some people had been led to the true knowledge of religion by reading the works of Chaucer. In proof of the plausibility of this statement, he quoted from and explained The Plowman's Tale.

The foregoing paragraph indicates that there was an interest in Chaucer due to his spurious works. The extent of this cannot be ascertained, but whatever it was, it was completely overshadowed by that derived from reading his genuine works.

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1. Foxe, John: Acts and Monuments, Vol. II, p. 356; Vol. IV, pp. 249-250.



### Adaptation of Chaucerian Material

Two types of evidence have been treated, and the third type will now be considered. This is the adaptation of Chaucerian material by the people of the sixteenth century.

Troilus and Criseyde appealed to the lyric writers. Feylde, Surrey, and Lyly magnified Troilus' fidelity in love and made his name the symbol of the lover who remains true even if the one he loves is unfaithful. Amator,<sup>1</sup> in Feylde's The Controversy between a Lover and a Jay,<sup>1</sup> declared after searching many books he could scarcely find, since the time of Troilus, one lover except Troilus who had remained true in painful love. In Surrey's Complaint of a dying lover refused upon his ladies unjust mistaking of his writing,<sup>2</sup> the shepherd desiring to honor a true lover who lost his life in attempting to accomplish a quest set by his lady love, buried the lover beside Troilus. In The Anatomy of Wit,<sup>3</sup> Euphues balanced the faithful Troilus against the fickle Aeneas. Wyatt<sup>4</sup> scorned Pandar's niceness of conscience. Feylde and Gascoigne spoke of the feigned love of Criseyde. Both Lollius and Chaucer are mentioned in connection with Troilus and Criseyde in Gascoigne's Delectable

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1. Dunbar Anthology, p. 208.

2. Tottel's Miscellany, pp. 16-18.

3. Lyly, John: The Anatomy of Wit, Arber, p. 73.

4. Satire III addressed to Sir Francis Brian, Tottel's Miscellany, p. 90.



history of Dan Bartholmew.<sup>1</sup> In The lover deserted by his love repenteth him of the true love he bare her, Criseyde typified the unfaithful wife; Penelope, the faithful wife. The author had spent years trying to find a woman as true to him as Penelope was to Ulysses, but instead he found a Criseyde. Judging from his own experience and that of Troilus, he decided that it was a mistake to be true in love.

A quotation from Troilus and Criseyde occurs in Margaret Roper's Letter to Lady Allington.<sup>2</sup> Margaret Roper was the daughter of Sir Thomas More, who was then imprisoned in the Tower for refusing to take an oath to settle the succession to the throne on the children of Ann Boleyn and to abjure all foreign potentates. Lady Allington, a stepdaughter, had had a conversation with Thomas Barnestone, lord chancellor, who said, "Just two people, Mr. More and the blind bishop, have refused to take the oath." Then Lady Allington wrote Margaret all the details, begging her to persuade her father to take the oath. Margaret took this letter to her father. He read it twice and then reasoned with Margaret. He explained that his conscience would not permit him to take the oath. Realizing that she could not change her father's decision, she sat in silence. Then her father asked her if she were musing on some new persuasion, and Margaret replied, "In good faith, father, I can no further go, but am (as I trowe Criseyde saith in

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1. Gascoigne, George: poems, 1907, Vol. I, p. 101.

2. Printed in Thomas More's The Utopia and Letters, p. 308.



Chaucer) comen to Dulcarnon even at my wittes end.<sup>1</sup> Margaret then wrote Lady Allington of this interview with her father.

This use of the Chaucerian quotation to suggest or to define a situation occurs frequently.

John Martial in his Treatise on the Cross states, "the friar's cowl must be honored." James Calfhill expressed his indignation at such an assertion in words from Chaucer, "Ye remember what the host in Chaucer said to Sir Thopas for his lewde ryme: the same do I say to you (bicause I have to do with your Canterbury Tales for your fair reasons)."<sup>2</sup>

"Uncouth, unkiste,"<sup>3</sup> are the words that E. K.<sup>4</sup> chose to describe the position of the poet Spenser in 1579 just before the publication of The Shepheardes Calender. E. K. meant that since the poems of Spenser were unknown to most men, few people regarded him as a poet, but as soon as his works would become known, he would be received by most people as a poet.<sup>5</sup>

John Heywood uses the entire line, "Unknown, unkissed; it is lost that is unsought," in one of his epigrams.<sup>6</sup>

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1. Troilus and Criseyde, Ek. III, ll. 930, 931.

2. Calfhill, James: Answers to the Treatise of the Crosse, Parker Society Publications, VII, p. 288.

3. Troilus and Criseyde, Ek. I, l. 809.

4. Oxford Spenser, p. 416.

5. E. K.'s Letter to Gabriel Harvey Prefixed to The Shepheardes Calender, Oxford Spenser, p. 416.

6. Heywood, John: The Proverbs, Epigrams, and Miscellanies, ed. John S. Farmer, 1906, p. 38.





"Forspeake not your fortune, nor hide not your need;  
 Nought venture, nought have; spare to speak, spare to  
 speed;  
 Unknown, unkissed; it is lost that is unsought."

In Toxophilus,<sup>1</sup> Ascham emphasized his own opinion of idleness by quoting from the Parson's Tale. Ascham felt that the horribleness of gaming even surpassed the eloquence of Chaucer. Yet, since no verses seemed to have more authority than ll. 590-594 of the Pardoner's Tale, he quoted these four lines. He sincerely wished that all great men in England would read diligently the Pardoner's Tale in order that they should realize the evils of dice and gaming. He closed with lines 627-8 of the latter tale.

"Lordes mighte find them other maner of playe  
 Honest ynough to drive the day awaye."

More than thirty years later, John Northbrooke quoted lines 590-628 from the same poem. Northbrooke was a staunch Protestant minister who, wishing to correct some of the evils of his time, wrote A Treatise wherein Dicing, Dauncing, Vaine places-----commonly on the Sabbath day, are reprov'd, by the authorite of the worde of God, and auncient Writers.<sup>2</sup> He

1. Ascham, Roger: Works, Vol. II, pp. 40, 42, 45, 48.

2. Shakespeare Society [ Publications ] Vol. 12, pp. 131-132.



has a dialogue between Youth and Age in which the evils of dicing are discussed. In the course of the dialogue, Youth asks: "Hath any honest man, of credit and reputation, been evil thought of for playing at dice before this time?"

Age replies, "Octavius Caesar has been censured for dice playing by his biographers, and Cicero was reproached by Marcus Antonius for this fault in open senate. One time the ambassador sent by Sparta to Corinth refused to carry on diplomatic relations with that city because he found her councillors of state playing at dice." Age then relates Chaucer's lines<sup>1</sup> treating this same story.

When Age has done this, Youth comments, "This is very notable; but yet, I pray you, show me what Chaucer's owne opinion is touching dice playing."

Age: His opinion is this in verses also:

"Now wol I yow deffenden hasardrye.

Hasard is verray mooder of lesynges,

And of deceite, and cursed forswerynges

Blaspheme of Crist, manslaughtre, and wast also

Of catel, and of tyme, and forthermo

It is repreeve and contrarie of honour

For to ben holde a commune hasardour

And ever the hyer he is of estaat,

The moore is he holden desolaat.

If that a prynce useth hasardrye

In alle governaunce and pollice,

1. Chaucer, G.: Pardoner's Tale, ll. 603-628.



He is, as by commune opinioun,  
Y-holde the lasse in reputacioun."<sup>1</sup>

These same lines against diceplay are quoted in the earliest publication describing the character of the English Gentleman. The publication is called The Institution of a Gentleman<sup>2</sup> and was printed by Thomas Marsh in 1555. The author's purpose<sup>3</sup> was to describe a man that is worthy to be called master, or gentleman. The lines explaining the true nature of gentleness are taken from The Wife of Bath's Tale. The principle that the word of a gentleman suits the deed is illustrated by lines 207-22 of The Maunciple's Tale.

A Chaucerian description or characterization was borrowed because it was satisfying. In A Quip for an Upstart Courtier<sup>4</sup> or A Quarrel between Velvett Breeches and Cloth Breeches for their Perrogative in England, the teller of the story is impanelling a jury to settle the dispute. Each party to the quarrel has the right to challenge the would-be juror. When a Sumner, a Jailer, and

1. Chaucer, G.: Pardoner's Tale, ll. 590-602.
2. Spurgeon, C. F. E.: Five . . . Chaucer . . . Allusion, p. 94.
3. Brydge: Restituta, Vol. I, pp. 536-40.
4. Greene, Robert: Works. A Quip for an Upstart Courtier, Vol. XI, p. 255.



an Informer come in a group, Clothbreeches makes a challenge against all three and says, "It bootes me to say little more against the Sumner than Chaucer did in his Canterbury Tales, who said he was a knave, a briber, and a bawd."

Chaucer's Pardoner became one of the important characters in John Heywood's interlude, A Merry Play between the Pardoner and the Friar, the Curate and Neighbour Pratt.<sup>1</sup> The scene is laid in a church where a group of people have gathered for religious services. A Friar begins his service and kneels down to pray. While the Friar is saying his prayers the Pardoner enters, greets the people, and promises the Pope's pardon to those who offer groats or pence to the relics which he is about to display. After this haughty speech are the following lines:

"But first ye shall know well that I come from Rome  
Lo, here my bulls, all and some:  
Our liege Lord's seal here on my patent  
I bear with me my body to warrant  
That no man be so bold, be he priest or clerk,  
Me to disturb of Christ's holy work;  
Nor have no disdain nor yet scorn  
Of these holy relics which saints have worn."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Heywood, John: Dramatic Works, pp. 3-25.

2. A Merry Play, ll. 19-26.





Then he displays his relics. The first displayed is the bone of a holy Jew's hip. Water into which this bone is dipped has wonderful curative power for both man and beast. The next relic is a mitten which insures a good crop of oats or wheat to the person who puts his hand into the mitten, provided that "he offer pence or groats." Other relics are mentioned in the next forty lines. Then the Pardoner addresses the women and declares that no great sinner will receive any power or grace from offering to his relics before she receives pardon for that sin. This pardon he can grant on authority of the Pope's bull.<sup>1</sup>

By this time the Friar has finished his prayer and begins his sermon. The Friar and Pardoner now alternate lines of their speeches until the Friar bids the Pardoner keep still. The Pardoner refuses and bases his right to continue his discourse on his permission from both king and Pope. The two fight.

While the Pardoner and the Friar are fighting, the Parson or Curate enters. He requests the intruders to stop fighting. The Friar and then the Pardoner tries to win the favor of the Curate, but without success. The Parson in his indignation tells them that they "shall sing another song" and calls Neighbour Pratt to him. Intending to put the Friar and the Pardoner into the stocks, the Curate decides to

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1. A Merry Play . . . Pratt, l. 110.



take the Friar and assigns the Pardoner to Neighbor Pratt. The Pardoner begs for leniency, but the Friar defies the Curate. The Curate attempts to take the Friar by force, but the Friar is the stronger. The Curate and the Friar fight; the Pardoner and Neighbor Pratt. When the Parson calls on Neighbor Pratt for help, Pratt replies,

"Nay, deal as thou canst with that elf,

For why I have enough to do myself."

When the Friar asked, "Will ye leave then, and let us in peace depart?" the Curate and Neighbor Pratt said, "Yes, by our lady, even with all our heart."

Friar and Bard: Then adieu to the devil, till we come again.

Parson and Pratt: And a mischief go with you both twain!

The author of this play used details from The Prologue to the Canterbury Tales in addition to taking twenty-nine lines word for word from the Preamble.

In The Prologue, Chaucer informs us that the Pardoner has come "straight from Rome" and has brought with him from Rome, edicts permitting him to grant pardons.

"With hym ther rood a gentil Pardoner<sup>1</sup>

- - - - -

That streight was comen fro the court of Rome<sup>2</sup>

- - - - -

His walet lay biforn hym in his lappe

Bret-ful of pardon, comen from Rome al hoot.<sup>3</sup>

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1. The Prologue, l. 669.

2. Ibid., l. 671.

3. Ibid., ll. 684-687.



But of his craft, fro Berwyk unto Ware  
 Ne was ther swich another pardoner,  
 For in his male he hadde a pilwe-bear,  
 Which that, he seyde, was oure lady reyl;  
 He seyde he hadde a gobet of the seyl  
 That Sainte Peter hadde, whan that he wente  
 Upon the see, til Jhesu Christ hym hente.  
 He hadde a croys of latoun, ful of stones,  
 And in a glas he hadde pigges bones.  
 But with thise relikes, whan that he fond  
 A poure person dwellynge upon lond,  
 Upon a day he gat hym moore moneye  
 Than that the person gat in monthes tweye;  
 And thus with feyned flaterye and japes  
 He made the person and the peple his apes."<sup>1</sup>

In The Preamble to the Pardoner's Tale, the Pardoner  
 tells the "Lordynges" that, whenever he preaches in a church,  
 he takes great pains to have a haughty speech which he can  
 ring out from memory as easily as a bell rings. He first tells  
 the congregation whence he comes, and then shows his bulls and  
 his liege Lord's seal so that no one will be bold enough to  
 disturb him. Then he says, "And after that thanne tell I forth  
 my tales." By "tales" he probably meant the stories he used,

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1. The Prologue, ll. 692-706.



to create in his hearers a desire to offer to the relics, and a feeling of need for pardon. After telling the tales, he again shows the papal bulls and those from cardinals, patriarchs, and from bishops. He speaks a few words in Latin, to stir the people to devotion. Then he displays his relics, one at a time, and tells the power of his pardon. Lastly, he preaches on his one theme, Radix malorum est Cupiditas. This plan for conducting services is followed exactly by the Pardoner in Heywood's play.

A comparison of the lines of the play with those in The Preamble show the following disagreements and parallels. No line or part of a line in the first eighteen lines of Heywood's play is found either in The Prologue or The Preamble. However, the lines are given in order that their tone may be compared with that of the speech of the Pardoner. These are the lines:

"God and Saint Leonard send ye all his grace,  
 As many as been assembled in this place!  
 Good devout people that here do assemble,  
 I pray God that ye may all well resemble  
 The image after which you are wrought,  
 And that ye serve that Christ in you bought.  
 Devout Christian people, ye shall all wit,  
 That I am comen hither ye to visit;  
 Wherefore let us pray thus, ere I begin:  
 Our Saviour preserve ye all from sin,  
 And enable ye to receive this blessed pardon,





Which is the greatest under the sun:  
 Granted by the Pope in his bulls under lead,  
 Which pardon ye shall find, when ye are dead;  
 That offereth outhir groats or else pence  
 To these holy relics which, ere I go hence,  
 I shall here show in open audience,  
 Exhorting ye all to do to them reverence."<sup>1</sup>

The haughty tone of the foregoing lines is in keeping with the speech suggested by Chaucer's Pardoner in these lines:

"'Lordynges,' quod he, 'in chirches whan I preche,  
 I peyne me to han an hauteyn speche,  
 And ryngge it out as round as goeth a belle,  
 For I kan al by rote that I telle.  
 My theme is alwey oon, and ever was,--  
Radix malorum est Cupiditas."<sup>2</sup>

This same haughty note is dominant in the speeches with the Friar.

Line 19, "But first ye shall know well that I come from Rome," puts in the first person what Chaucer told in the third person in The Prologue. This line also makes use of the detail, "whence he came," mentioned in l. 335 of The

1. Heywood, John: Dramatic Works, pp. 5-6.

2. The beginning of The Preamble of the Pardoner's Tale.



Preamble. Again, to make the words suit the action, Heywood substitutes "Lo, here my bulls" for Chaucer's "And thanne my bulles show I;" "my patent I bear with" for "my patents that show I first."

The following lines are taken almost word for word from The Preamble to the Pardoner's Tale:

21. "Our liege Lord seal here on my patent

- - - - -

23. That no man be so bold, be he priest or clerk,--

24. Me to disturb of Christ's holy work;--

- - - - -

34. Take of this water, and wash his tongue

And it will be whole anon; and furthermore

36. Of pox and scabs, and every sore,--

- - - - -

39. And if any man, that any beast oweth,

- - - - -

41. Fasting will drink of this well a draught,

As that holy Jew hath us taught,

43. His beasts and his stores shall multiply

- - - - -

Though a man be foul in jealous rage,

Let a man with this water make his pottage,

47. And never more shall he his wife mistrust,

Though he in sooth the fault by her wist,

49. Or had she been taken with Friars two or three.

- - - - -



51. He that his hand will put in this mitten,  
 He shall have increase of his grain,  
 That he hath sown, be it wheat or oats,  
 54. So that he offers pence or else groats."<sup>1</sup>

The lines just quoted correspond with the following lines from Chaucer:

337. Oure lige lordes seel on my patente,  
 - - - - -  
 339. That no man be so boold, ne preest, ne clerk,  
 340. Me to destourbe of Christes hool work;  
 - - - - -  
 356. Taak water of that welle and wassh his tonge,  
 357. And it is hool anon; and forthermore  
 358. Of pokkes, and of scabbe, and every soor,  
 - - - - -  
 361. If that the goode-man that the beestes oweth  
 362. Wol every wyke, or that the cok hym croweth,  
 363. Fastynge, drinken of this welle a draughte  
 364. As thilke hooly Jew our eldres taughte,  
 365. His beestes and his stoor shal multiplie  
 - - - - -  
 367. For though a man be falle in jalous rage,  
 Lat maken with this water his potage,  
 And never shal ne moore his wyf mystriste,

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1. Heywood, John: Dramatic Works, pp. 5-6.



370. Though he the soothe of hir defaute wiste,--

371. [Al had she taken preestes two or thre.]

Heere is a miteyn eek, that ye may se;

He that his hand wol putte in this miteyn,

374. He shal have multipliynge of his grayn,

Whan he hath sownen, be it whete or otes,

376. So that he offre pens, or elles grotes.<sup>1</sup>

Thus lines 21, 23, 24, 34, 35, 36, 39, 41-43, 45-49, 51-54, are taken almost word for word from The Preamble to the Pardoner's Tale. Lines 25 and 26,

"Nor have no disdain nor yet scorn

Of these holy relics which saints have worn,"

are Heywood's own. Lines 27-33 correspond except in one detail to the Chaucerian lines dealing with the first relic.

In the play, the relic is the hip bone of a holy Jew; in The Preamble, the shoulder bone of a holy Jew's sheep.

Lines 27-33 of the play are

27. First here I show ye of a holy Jew's hip

A bone--I pray you, take good keep

To my words and mark them well:

If any of your beasts bellies do swell,

Dip this bone in the water that he doth take

Into his body, and the swelling shall slake;

33. And if any worm have your beasts stung,"

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1. Chaucer, Geoffrey: The Preamble to the Pardoner's Tale, ll. 337, 339, 340, 356, 357, 358, 361, 362-365, 366-371, 373-376.





Lines 37 and 38 of the play,

"He shall be quite whole that drinketh of the  
well

That this bone is dipped in: it is truth that  
I tell,"

show a slight variation from the corresponding lines in  
Chaucer.

"Shal every sheepe be hool that of this well  
Drynketh a draughte. Taak kepe eek what I  
telle."<sup>1</sup>

Heywood has man, instead of a sheep, cured of pox by a  
drink of the water into which the bone is dipped.

Line 50, "And another holy relic may ye see,"  
is not as dramatic as Chaucer's "Heere is a miteyn, eek,  
that ye may se."<sup>2</sup> In lines 55-94 of the play, the Pardon-  
er displays relics which are not mentioned by Chaucer.  
Line 95, "But one thing, ye women all, I warrant you,"  
lacks the clever touch of Chaucer's, "Goode men and wom-  
men, o thyng warne I yow." Lines 96 to 104 are identical  
with lines 378 to 386 of The Preamble with exception of  
the change of a personal pronoun. This change was made  
necessary because Heywood addressed only the women, while

1. The Preamble, ll. 359, 360.

2. Ibid., l. 372.

3. Ibid., l. 377.



Chaucer warned both men and women. Lines 104-110 express the thought of lines 386-388 of The Preamble.

Lines 105-110 of the play:

Come hither to me, on Christ's holy name  
And because ye  
Shall unto me  
Give credence at the full  
Mine auctoritee  
Now shall ye see  
Lo! here the Pope's bull!

Lines 386-388 of The Preamble are,

They wol come up and offre on Goddes name,  
And I assoile hem by the auctoritee  
Which that by bulle y-graunted was to me."

Therefore Heywood has taken from The Preamble to the Pardoner's Tale twenty-nine lines word for word and adapted to the needs of his play sixteen other lines.

In character Heywood's Pardoner is like the Pardoner sketched in The Prologue and revealed through his own statements in The Preamble to the Pardoner's Tale. Chaucer's Pardoner said that his only aim in preaching was to win money, for he was not concerned about the souls of the people. He spit out his anger under the guise of holiness. He abhorred laboring with his hands and yet wanted the best things and the worst things that money could buy; consequently, he became a very skilful Pardoner. He knew how to make an appeal to



different kinds of people, and no scheme was too disreputable for him to use if it would only win groats or pence. He agreed that he was a vicious man but could tell a moral tale.

Heywood's Pardoner shows his disregard for religious services by beginning to address the people while the Friar is praying. He is so eager for money that he wants to make his plea first. In the battle of words, the Friar accuses the Pardoner of trying to lead people to heaven by their "purse strings." The Pardoner's replies to the Friar and the fight are what one should expect from Chaucer's Pardoner placed in a similar situation.

Heywood seems to have realized the dramatic possibilities of The Preamble of the Pardoner's Tale and dramatized it.

Other plays based on motives suggested by the study of Chaucer were given throughout the first half of the century. "Ralph Radclif's school plays at Hitchin included one on Griselda and one on Melibeus. Nicholas Grimald wrote one on Troilus and another had been acted by the Chapel at court in 1516."<sup>1</sup> In 1566, during one of Queen Elizabeth's Progresses, she visited the University of Oxford. One feature of the entertainment was the acting of the play of Palemon and Arcit<sup>2</sup> written by Richard Edwards, a gentleman of the Queen's Chapel. This play was probably based

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1. Chambers, E. K.: The Mediæval Stage, Oxford, 1903, Vol. II, p. 205.

2. Nichols, John: The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth, London, 1788.



on the Knight's Tale.

These different uses of Chaucerian material indicate that the people of the sixteenth century quoted Chaucer in conversations, discussions, and letters, and that one dramatist dramatized the Preamble to the Pardoner's Tale.

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In conclusion, Chaucer was widely read in both England and Scotland during the sixteenth century. He was admired and quoted and regarded as the greatest English poet. Many were in harmony with the poet who wrote,

"Vertue florisheth in Chaucer still,  
Though death of hym, hath wrought his will."





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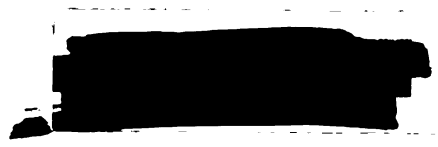








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